STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

GOOD GOVERNANCE: AFRICA'S GORDIAN KNOT

BY

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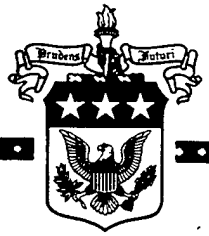
USAWC CLASS OF 2001



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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Good Governance: Africa's Gordian Knot

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 3 April 2001 PAGES: 28 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This paper examines the broad U.S. National Security Objective of "Promoting Democracy" in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Forty-eight independent nations make up the region of Sub Saharan Africa. Within this region there are over 700 ethnic groups with almost as many different dialects. With this vast diversity in the region, "promoting democracy" faces a myriad of challenges.

The U.S. National Security Strategy defines three classes of national interests: vital, important, and humanitarian. Using the definitions found in the NSS, it is unlikely that any U.S. interests in Sub-Saharan Africa would be considered "vital". While this "Cold War" paradigm of prioritizing interests was useful during the era of the U.S. and Soviet competition, the global challenges the U.S. faces in the 21st Century are much more diverse and dynamic. U.S. national interests would be better served if viewed within a broad strategic context in which regional instability is a threat to our security and national well-being. Within this framework, democracy and good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa emerge as a vital U.S. regional interest.

While most Africans desire democratic government, the challenges to establishing and maintaining democracy in the Sub-Saharan region run deep. Tribal culture, regional conflicts, humanitarian crises, and the legacy of colonialism are all sources of instability presenting challenges to African democracy. Understanding these challenges is the first step toward framing an effective U.S. regional policy.

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A cow gave birth to a fire: she wanted to lick it, but it burned; she wanted to leave it, but she could not because it was her own child.

Ethiopian Proverb

Africa covers more than 11.7 million square miles and has over 600 million inhabitants. It is not uncommon to think of Africa as a single entity; however, there are over fifty-four different nations with forty-eight located below the Sahara (fig 1). Africa also enjoys a great demographic diversity with over 700 unique ethnic groups that have just as many languages and dialects.[1] With this diverse and dynamic environment it is easy to see why an understanding of the intricacies of Sub-Saharan Africa's hyperactive geopolitical situation is a major challenge for the United States (U.S.).

Some critics view the current relationships between the U.S. and the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa as being guided by a policy that is "incoherent at its worst, and inconsistent at its best."[2] While the political, economic, and military relationships have improved since the end of the Cold War, U.S. policy would certainly benefit from a clearer definition of interests and a visionary end state to shape the security environment in the region.[3]

The purpose of this paper is to assess U.S. policy for the Sub-Saharan Africa region in light of a broader policy of international engagement. Policy options, however, are meaningless without a framework from which they can be developed. Therefore, this assessment will establish U.S. regional interests and discuss the imperative for good governance in the region, as well as varying African perspectives of democracy and good governance and how they differ as compared to the views of the western world. This assessment will be followed by a brief examination of the challenges to good governance in the Sub-Saharan region and will conclude with several elements our future policy should include to successfully meet our national objectives in the region.

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The President's 2000 *National Security Strategy* seeks an expansive community of responsible democracies, bound together by the free flow of goods, resources, and information, safe from irrational actors with hostile ideas and dangerous technologies. The *National Security Strategy* advances our nation's fundamental and enduring security needs under the following three core objectives: enhance America's security, bolster America's economic prosperity, and promote democracy and human rights abroad. The foundation of this strategy is continued U.S

Africa

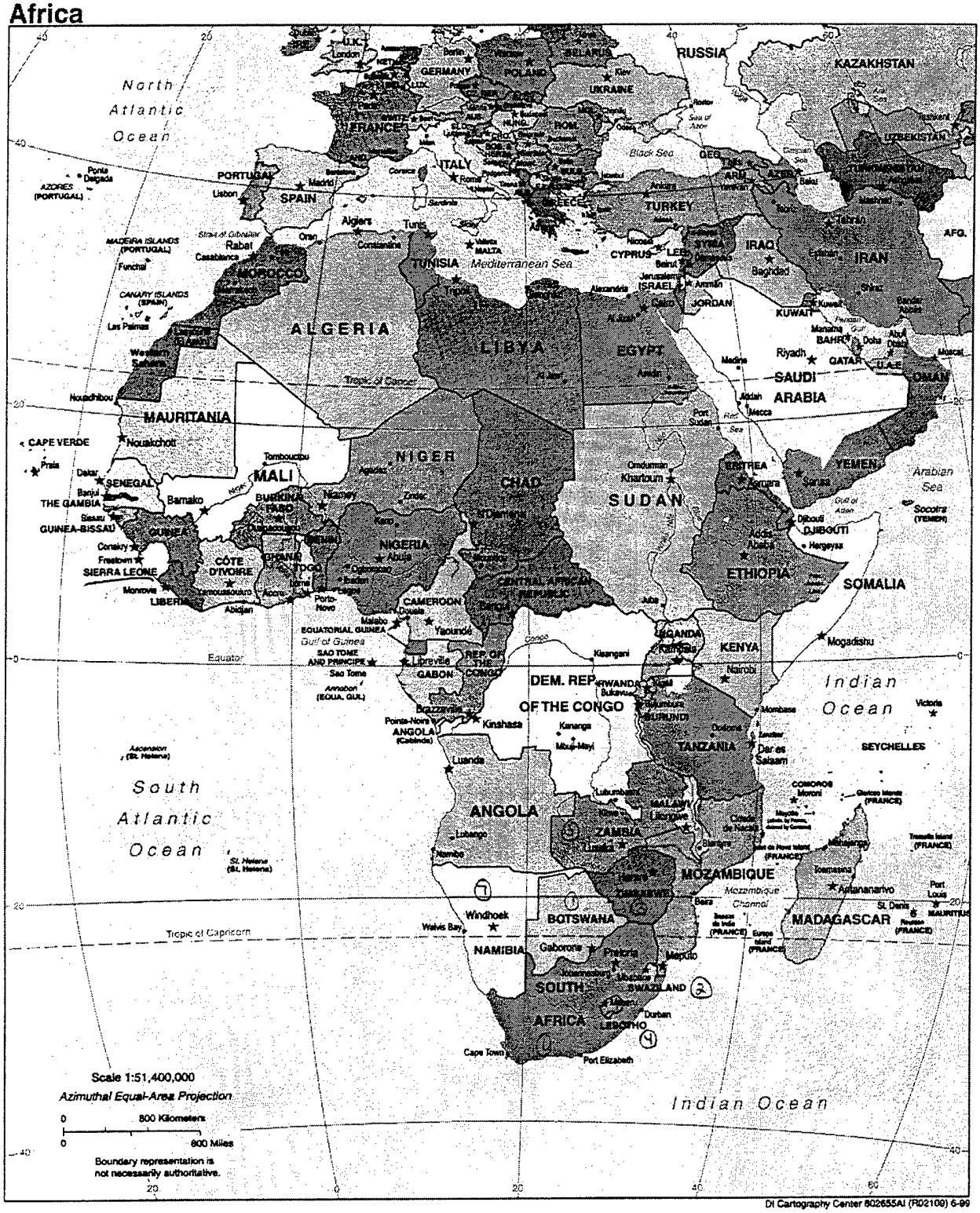

Figure 1 - MAP OF AFRICA

engagement and leadership abroad, and, it is built on the premise that the U.S. cannot be secure at home unless we are willing to use all the instruments of national power to influence the actions of other states and non-state actors. We exercise our influence on behalf of our national interests as well as for the benefit of the community of nations that share our interests.

As a superpower, the United States has national interests throughout the world. These interests range from vital to humanitarian as described in the *2000 National Security Strategy* outlined below:

- **Vital**: The physical security of U.S. territory and that of our allies, the safety of U.S. citizens, U.S. economic well-being, and the protection of our critical infrastructures.
- **Important**: Interests that do not affect our national survival, but do affect U.S. national well-being and the character of the world, such as halting refugee flows, protecting innocent minorities, and protecting the environment.
- **Humanitarian and other interests**: Actions demanded by our values such as disaster relief, support of democratization, and promoting sustainable development.[4]

Relying on these definitions we could draw the conclusion that the U.S. has no vital interests in Sub-Saharan Africa. This model for defining national interests served the U.S. well during the Cold War when we faced a monolithic threat and a geopolitical environment characterized by East vs. West politics. However, in this post Cold War security environment, the U.S. can no longer afford to cling to the security theorems of the past.

Today the U.S. is confronted with a geopolitical environment shaped by regional interests, non-state actors, and transnational threats. Indeed, Americans who have doubts about the U.S. having possible vital security interests in Africa only have to recall the events of August 7, 1998 when terrorist bombs destroyed our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Yet, preventing terrorism and extremism are not the only potentially vital interests we have on the African continent. We have many strategic economic interests in Africa. Today, Africa is the source of over 15% of U.S. imported oil as compared to 17% from the Middle East. Within the next ten years, oil imports from Africa are projected to surpass those from the Persian Gulf. The U.S. also relies on Africa as a major provider to fuel our hi-tech economy with strategic minerals such as platinum, cobalt, bauxite and manganese.[5]

On the darker side, over 30% of the heroin intercepted at U.S. ports of entry in recent years was seized from air and sea traffic originating in African countries. In addition, Americans lose over $2 billion annually to white-collar crime syndicates based in Africa. Nigeria, for

example, is the world's fifth leading producer/distributor of counterfeit U.S. currency as well as a major sanctuary for illicit global financial schemes such as insurance and credit card fraud, and advance-fee scams. [6]

The world's most deadly and communicable diseases, Ebola, malaria, and HIV/AIDS, are prevalent in Africa. As people move across borders and oceans, so do the diseases they carry. Preventing, containing, and controlling the transmission of these deadly diseases is a vital security imperative for the U.S. both in Africa and elsewhere.[7]

The same forces of technology that offer new economic and social opportunities also create new dangers. Africa presents the U.S. with a new set of transnational security threats that can place great risk on national security and the security of nations across the world. Transnational threats such as weapons sales, proliferation of weapons of mass effects, and drug trafficking are extremely difficult to combat where national institutions are weakest, where people are poorest, and conflicts most enduring.

The only way the U.S. will be prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities we face in 21st Century Africa is to view U.S. vital interests in a broad strategic context. In this new security paradigm the threats to our security lie in regional instability fueled by political opportunism, conflict, organized crime, and humanitarian crises. Within this 21st Century framework, interests that were once considered "important" or "humanitarian" take on a vital significance to our national well-being. In this context, U.S. vital interests demand strong, democratic, and economically viable partners in Africa.

In general terms, our primary interest in Africa, as elsewhere, is defending our national security and protecting Americans abroad. However, Africa is not a monolith. There are 48 nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and U.S. interests must reflect and address the diversity of the challenges and opportunities that confront us. Dan Henk, the former Director of African Studies at the U.S. Army War College, suggests two questions policy analysts should ask to assist in formulating regional interests: First, has the U.S. committed, or is it likely to commit a significant quantity of public-sector resources to advance or achieve the condition we hope to create, and second, is the condition we seek a major foreign policy "end" in itself, or just a contributor/enabler to achieving a larger condition?[8] Using Henk's criteria within the broad strategic context for the 21st century, U.S. vital interests in Sub-Saharan Africa could include the following:

Establishment of democracy and good governance

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Control of infectious diseases

Reduction of international crime and drug trafficking

Deterrence of Terrorism

Timely response to humanitarian crises

U.S. POLICY

U.S. foreign policy must be shaped within the context of regional interests. When viewed from a broad strategic context, it is vital that we encourage African efforts to establish democratic institutions in governments. A democratic form of government that respects human rights and seeks equitable economic growth is the best guarantee of peaceful change and stability. Also, as an enabling function for most other regional interests in Sub-Saharan Africa, democracy provides the framework to help bring an end to the many conflicts and crises, and fosters a peaceful, stable environment that is essential to sustain development for economic growth.[9]

Overall, some progress has been made on promoting democracy and good governance in recent years. Yet challenges and frustrations frequently arise. Large pockets of transnational conflict remain and economic progress has a long way to go.[10] Changes in the nature and the capacities of African governments are key to the continent's future. Most of these new governments, however, have not had the time to come to grasp the enormity of their problems. Several states are barely managing to survive. Indeed, for many states their primary focus is on mere survival and self-preservation, while other states flounder in a "quasi-autocratic state of existence as the social, economic, and political infrastructures of their countries erode."[11]

DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Many Africans believe that the issue of good governance is directly related to the general conditions in their countries. An examination of history shows there were traditional forms of democracy, autocracy, monarchy, and oligarchy in state organized societies as well as in stateless societies in African pre-colonial history. These traditional political systems functioned not because of their forms, but because they fulfilled the needs in societies. Traditional leaders derived their political legitimacy from the consent of the ruled. Justice was based on an established set of moral laws, with authority extending across a dispersed community sharing common social obligations.[12]

While there is general agreement in most African countries that conflict must end, corruption must be rooted out, and economies must be restored, there is less agreement among Africans about the meaning of democracy. Whereas western ideas about democracy are based on the Jeffersonian model of political and social rights for individuals, the reality of Africa is still

one in which collectivities or ethnic groups, rather than individuals, are demanding social justice. Maxwell Owusu, a Ghanaian anthropologist, believes the challenge of governance in contemporary Africa is to "recognize and satisfy the goals and aspirations of different groups and their leaders."[13] What matters is a respect for cultures, languages, and ethnic concerns in the distribution of resources. Clearly the vast diversity of African societies necessitates types of governance based on compromises between groups and individuals. Given this, it is politicians' failure to compromise with the traditional leaders in the interest of all the groups that has led to disaster.

Today Africans are demanding free elections and the end of autocratic rule. However, there is growing recognition that Africans must be free to choose or to develop forms of democratic governance that will be in harmony with their local environment. There is also a growing sentiment that the probability of successful governmental reform is increased when the traditional leaders of the diverse ethnic groups of African countries are involved in the governance of their societies. When and how this happens should be a function of local conditions, but the framework must permit dialogue and accommodations within accepted global protocols. In short, African style democracy may require the integration of indigenous methods of village cooperation with innovative forms of government, combining the "Jeffersonian" principle of universal rights with the uniqueness of African customs and respected traditions.[14]

Unfortunately, in many African countries today governments pursue and advance opportunistic interests and objectives of mostly the ruling elites, their families, and their supporters. The major obstacle to good governance in Africa, then, is political opportunism coupled with the absence of sufficient institutional arrangements, which effectively constrain the state, its civil servants, and politicians. In some African countries constitutional reconstruction is needed to provide for systems of checks and balances, a fair and impartial allocation of resources, and an independent judiciary. In many African states, however, sufficient constitutional provisions already exist. These states are faced with the greater challenge of law enforcement.[15]

CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

Promoting democracy in Africa is a messy and difficult process. This is largely attributed to the breakdown of authority and the proliferation of ad hoc political arrangements. Centuries of African socio-political cultural development, ethnic conflict and humanitarian crises, and the legacy of colonialism present challenges to establishing and maintaining good governance throughout much of Africa. These challenges have worked to keep all but a few African states from establishing democratic political systems with the Jeffersonian attributes of respect for

human rights, the rule of law, and governmental accountability.[16] Indeed, promoting democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa may require decades. However, until the challenges to democracy have been fully comprehended and addressed, they cannot be mastered. It is the mastery of these issues that is crucial to untying Africa's Gordian knot to achieve good governance and conditions creating stability and regional growth.

CULTURAL LEGACIES

Five or six thousand years ago the Sahara was drying up, pushing to its margins large populations that could not adapt to the change without moving. The decline of these more advanced cultures as a result of the climate change virtually eliminated any pressure on the less advanced hunter-gatherer cultures in southern and central Africa to change from a way of life that had proven satisfactory for thousands of years.[17] The expanding desert, coupled with other geographical features of the continent, created a barrier that impeded cross cultural exchanges and competition with advancing cultures in the Mediterranean and Middle East region, and led to isolation for much of the Sub-Saharan region. As a consequence of this isolation, Sub-Saharan culture developed at a different pace.

In addition to cultural isolation, the drying up of the Sahara forced the inhabitants to find new ways of providing food. In fact, much of today's African agricultural innovation was stimulated by the population pressures that emerged along the remaining waterways to the south and east of this expanding desert. As agriculture became the basis of their informal economies, a military force for conquest and protection was needed for control over long-distance trade routes, and became an important aspect in the development of states. In some cases, African kingdoms retained an element of kinship-based social organization that led to the usually long process of state building. In the states or kingdoms that emerged, rulers established special privileges for their own lineages and created an extended lineage from which to exercise authority.[18]

Today the social fabric of tropical African life is characterized by at least 700 tribes living within closely defined kinship obligations of the extended family system.[19] Africans still rely on this extended family organization and call upon kinship behavior to maintain justice, as well as cultural and territorial integrity. The tribal organization provides for relative security of the individual within the tribal area, but makes national level cooperation difficult.[20]

As in the past, many Africans see any state without some type of symbolic lineage-based authority as inherently tyrannical. Yet, to westerners who are accustomed to state forms of organization, African social organization based on kinship seems chaotic. These non-state societies are seen as less civilized or lacking in social and political development. This view has

often clouded the important role of local kinship relations in maintaining peace and harmony in many African societies.[21] However, the dependence on relatives is the main reason for the widespread practice of nepotism and its companions: inefficiency, inexperience, and corruption.[22]

These cultural legacies and traditional tribal politics coupled with unscrupulous leaders present impediments to democratic reforms and pluralism. In some extreme cases this volatile combination results in ethnic conflict that can lead to humanitarian crises such as refugee migrations or even genocide.

CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Conflicts in Africa are more striking for their similarities than differences. While most conflicts in Africa share a number of underlying causes, research points to failed political leadership as a common factor behind all African conflicts. Dictatorial policies and political opportunism have become endemic with many African leaders and have resulted in almost perpetual conflict and crises.[23]

Many of the coups in Africa seek not just the replacement of one leader by another, but also the displacement of the entire dominant ethnic or tribal group by another. The issue of ethnic dominance has led to several extended civil conflicts. The ethnic groups involved do not dispute the legacy of the existing state and may not intend to challenge the legitimacy of the state in the obvious way revolutionaries would. However, the consequences of the combined actions of the rival ethnic groups in these civil wars can lead to the "Balkanization" of the state. Given the fact that these ethnic groups occupy different parts of the country, they effectively establish de facto states that are more ethnically homogenous than the legitimate state. Examples of such conflict include the civil wars in Liberia, southern Somalia, Sudan, and Angola.[24]

African states will continue to be racked by conflicts unless leaders agree on how to govern their multi-faceted nation-states and how to distribute their economic resources equitably. Without a compromise ensuring "ethnic justice", neither Jeffersonian democracy, nor any other variation of government, will succeed in Africa. If democracy is to have any future whatsoever, it will have to adjust to local situations, and its characteristics "shaped by indigenous African social and cultural traditions."[25]

Rural leaders are the key to stability in the rural areas.[26] The challenge is to harmonize the role of traditional rulers in modern governance to avoid ethnic conflict. However, in the higher echelons of African government within the new nations, the rural leader is viewed as an insignificant individual who goes about managing his local affairs and carrying out, with varying

degrees of success, the policies and hopes of the government. When viewed from below, from the inner recesses of the village, the leader is a man of authority, a man who has used wealth, heredity, or personal magnetism to gain a position of influence.

Democracy and the involvement of traditional leaders, however, is not necessarily a panacea for conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, far from mitigating ethnic conflict, in some cases the transition to democracy, and the type of democracy chosen have exacerbated ethnic tensions in some countries. In Angola, for example, the unwillingness of Ovimbundu leader Jonas Savimbi to accept electoral defeat in Angola's 1992 presidential elections and hand over power, led to the renewal of civil war between Ovimbundus and the elected government.[27] One alternative to Angola's traditional winner-take–all system of democracy is the power sharing arrangement implemented by the Government of National Unity in South Africa under the interim constitution following the 1994 elections.

In South Africa, the former "whites only" parliament was elected by a constituency-based winner-take-all system. Under this system, the African National Congress (ANC), led by Nelson Mandella, was expected to win 50-60 percent of the popular vote and 70 to 80 percent of the parliamentary seats in the 1994 election.[28] Recognizing the destabilizing effect of a winner-take-all election, the ANC and the National Party, led by Deklerk, agreed that the elections should be conducted under a system of proportional representation. Under this system the electoral law would establish a quota for parliamentary representation by any party by the percentage won of the national vote.[29] Furthermore, and most importantly, under this model of proportional representation parties that received at least 20% of the national vote were guaranteed representation by a Deputy President, with parties receiving at least 5% of the national vote entitled to representation in the Cabinet proportional to their electoral strength.[30] The resulting Government of National Unity established under the interim constitution reflected a three-way executive power sharing arrangement: Mandella of the ANC as President, and Deklerk of the National Party and Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom party each winning a position as Deputy President. [31] The choice of a proportional representation system for this first election is significant given that the ANC would have won the National Assembly elections under a traditional democratic electoral system. Indeed, proportional representation, as the fundamental tenet of the executive power-sharing agreement in the interim constitution, was crucial to establishing an atmosphere of inclusiveness and reconciliation.[32]

There are potentially hundreds of ethno-territorial and boundary disputes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Many of these conflicts result in severe humanitarian crises ranging from genocide, mass migrations, and disease, to poverty, starvation, and general misery. In

response to these humanitarian crises, demands on the state and the international community for humanitarian relief operations, or non-combatant evacuation operations, will be required for an indefinite period.

Adding to the humanitarian crises, population growth estimates for the region indicate an increase from 620 million in 2000 to 900 million in 2025. This growth will help to perpetuate poverty and intensify ethnic disputes over diminishing resources. As a consequence, government institutions will experience increasing demands that will eventually lead to their overall inability to sustain the state. Compounding the pressures on government institutions is the spread of AIDS. In several Sub-Saharan African nations it is estimated that twenty percent or more of adults are infected with the virus that causes AIDS. Not only will this devastate the current ranks of the African ruling elite and military leadership, it could result in an estimated 40 million orphaned children. Other problems in tropical Africa are related to the conquest by European powers and are part of the colonial legacy.

LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

The historical record is not clear, but it seems fair to say that when the Europeans first came to Africa there were, in many places, coherent, functioning societies with varying degrees of sophistication. Some were characterized by great political subtlety and artistic accomplishment, others by simple hunting and gathering communities. Many of these indigenous societies were extremely oppressive in their practices, but all possessed their own integrity, and integrated into the natural environment of the continent.[33] This was, in large part, destroyed by colonialism.

Africa's current borders were established by the European colonial powers present at the 1885 Berlin Conference and reflected European power relationships of the time. While the borders within these colonial empires usually reflected interest group politics in the home country or administrative convenience, they did not recognize African tribal divisions or rivalries.[34] Consequently, as African states became independent, many of these new states found that the inherited borders divided ethnic groups between two or more countries and enclosed diverse ethnic groups that had either little experience cooperating with each other, or a history of aggression.[35]

Colonial economic penetration of Africa came without any of the pre-industrial social and political development that led to western capitalism. The colonial rule imposed by Europeans on Africans reflected the unrestrained economic drive of capitalism, but without the social and political conscience and protections that tempered that drive in Europe. This unconstrained drive turned millions of traditionally self-sufficient Africans into rubber-tappers, coffee growers,

tin miners, tea pickers, etc., and then subjected this new agricultural and mining working class to the complex world of commodity trading. It uprooted ancient laws and in exchange gave western style justice, whose ideas disrupted the local culture by striking at the roots of time honored traditions and customs. Colonialism, even during its most benevolent moments, generally viewed Africans as objects to be exploited, and usually assumed their inferiority was irremediable.[36] There were, however, attempts at western-style education, uplift, and religious salvation with the intentions of remaking the "pagan" Africans in the mold of their European masters.

From the start of European domination, and until well after WWI, education for Africans was left generally in the hands of the missionaries. The student bodies had a large majority of boys, with subject matters concentrated on reading, writing and religious instruction. In addition, there was also some training in trades such as carpentry and bricklaying so the Africans would be useful workers.[37] Few Africans received advanced training. Consequently, at the time they became independent, illiteracy in tropical African countries ranged from 80% to 90% of the total population with only a handful of graduates in engineering and sciences. The newly independent countries had to rely on foreigners to handle many of the technological and administrative tasks until Africans could be adequately trained to handle them. This has had a detrimental effect on efficiency and persists in much of tropical Africa today.

Those Africans fortunate enough to receive some higher education were always taught in the language of the colonial power. Hence, the official and commercial language of the independent states in Africa is usually that of its former colonial masters. This difference in language brought by the colonists has been the basis of many post-independence problems. For example, while the Gambians are historically and ethnically tied to Senegal, English is the language in Gambia and French is the official language of Senegal. Additionally, there is a residual economic framework based on former colonial status; almost every nation is economically tied to France or Britain. Fluctuations and devaluations in currency, trade restrictions and the political squabbling associated with the European Common Market have, at times, served to prevent a genuinely free flow of commerce among the present-day Africans.[38]

If there are any merits in the attempt to remake Africans and their society into a mirror image of Europe, the merits are not noticeable as the colonizers did not stay in Africa long enough for it to have chance of succeeding. "Colonialism lasted only long enough to destroy the preexisting social and political institutions, but not long enough to put anything solid and lasting in their place."[39] The British and the French attempted, at the last moment, to introduce western-style, multiparty democracy in most of their colonies as they were withdrawing.

Patterned after the British and French parliamentary systems, these fledgling democracies took on all the attributes of their former colonial masters and, hence, did not survive long in most African countries. Most of these failing democracies were replaced by either one-party systems or military regimes. Although these regimes claimed to represent the entire nation, the president or leader usually gave key positions to the people he trusted most: his own ethnic group, or tribe. As a result, particular tribal factions dominated key leadership positions within the government and the army. Examples include the Marehan clan in Somalia under Major General Siad Barre, and the Kalengin in Kenya under Daniel arap Moi.[40]

THE WAY AHEAD

Undoubtedly, many present day conflicts and problems in Africa stem from economic, social, and political changes associated with the establishment of European colonial rule. However, as important as colonialism was, patterns and identities established over the thousand years of pre-colonial African history influenced the colonial experience, and continue to be a powerful force shaping postcolonial Africa.[41]

Ethnic conflict and instability brought about by the clash of culture and historical legacies will remain challenges to establishing democracy in the Sub-Saharan region for many years to come. Although some nations may enjoy growing regional influence, particularly South Africa and Nigeria, most will be preoccupied with internal stability, humanitarian, and economic hardship challenges. Upheavals are destined to occur in nations facing divisive leadership, ethnic, religious, and regional antagonisms. Dictatorships and recurring coups will mark those states that have suffered internal collapse and disorder. While the need for direct U.S. military involvement will probably be limited to non-combatant evacuations, Africans will increasingly look to the U.S. for economic assistance, support for peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. The challenge we face in the U.S. is to remain a loyal partner. We cannot let Afro-pessimism, the notion that Africa and Africans are hopeless, lead to disinterest and isolationist policies.

While the present holds many challenges for democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa, the future also provides new opportunities for the United States and our African partners to advance our national interests on a mutual basis. However, a superficial understanding of both the uniqueness and complexity of the challenges confronting Africa, and the tendency on the part of the western world to view Africa's problems through the lenses of their western culture and society, account for failed policy prescriptions concerning stability.[42] As our leadership works to shape our new national strategy, the following considerations will help make our Sub-Saharan

policy more relevant, and hence, more effective in building democracy and meeting our emerging vital interests in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGE VITAL U.S. INTERESTS IN THE REGION

As we begin the first decade of the 21st Century, we need to reexamine what we consider to be U.S. vital interests. In many ways our current perceptions of vital interests are stuck in the Cold War mind set that views vital interests as elements that possess the capability to militarily or economically challenge the U.S. and our allies. As our reliance on energy imports from Africa increases, access to, and the stability of the oil producing nations in Africa are of vital importance not only to the U.S. but to Europe as well. In addition, existing transnational threats from disease, organized crime, and terrorism are already having a global impact.

RECOGNIZE RESOURCE LIMITATIONS

Although the U.S. may have vital interests in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, the available resources the U.S. can commit to achieving our policy goals in the region are fiscally and physically limited. Limited resources force policy makers to be selective, set priorities, and consolidate and coordinate our engagement efforts. Given that Africa is three-and-one-half times the size of the United States, we must be selective in where we provide assistance, and whom we choose to assist. We must also use effective and appropriate tools such as: diplomacy, economic incentives and sanctions, law enforcement, and military cooperation. Indeed, we must focus our efforts in the areas where we believe we can make the most difference, such as promoting democracy or managing the control and spread of infectious diseases. The U.S., however, must also keep in mind the effects the legacy of African colonialism has on bilateral efforts. Recalling their dependency on former colonial powers, African leaders may be more open to relationships through multilateral channels.[43] Hence, our interests may be better served though multilateral approaches using sub-regional African organizations or the United Nations.

RELEVANCE TO THE AFRICANS

If U.S. policy is to be effective in promoting behaviors beneficial to the U.S. and to Africans, it needs to be relevant to the challenges facing African states. While one of our vital interests may be to promote democracy, U.S. policy makers must listen when African leaders call for increased nation building assistance. Clearly democracy/good governance and economic development cannot take root until basic security needs are met. Peacemaking followed by peacekeeping, while not a desirable military mission, may become a focus of our mil-to-mil engagement activities on the continent. Furthermore, U.S. policy must not try to remake the Africans or their society in the image of the United States; rather, it should reflect a long-term commitment to partnership with African states. Challenges to African democracy do

not run on an American four-year cycle; therefore U.S. relevance and credibility in the region is strengthened when our policy is coherent and consistent, and not based on domestic partisan politics. Policy makers must guard against donor fatigue when progress seems to bog down, and not lose sight of the fact that it has taken western democracy several hundred years, and two world wars to become what it is today.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND COALITIONS

The breadth and enormity of the challenges facing the region exceed the resources and expertise of U.S. Government agencies. Meaningful progress in building stability, democracy, and human rights requires establishment of strategic partnerships with and among African states. Formal collective security agreements, for example, could greatly contribute to internal security by providing a formal mechanism for addressing cross boarder aggression from separatist movements. Clearly with the potential for enormous humanitarian crises looming in the future, interstate cooperation on preventative measures can mitigate the impact of a conflict. The U.S. should also seek out and establish mentor states within Africa to assist with training, assistance, and support in areas where they have demonstrated expertise. Finally, Africa cannot build prosperous stable democracies without vibrant private sectors of the economy and active civil societies. We must encourage the private sector and non-governmental organizations to form partnerships with African states to stimulate the public and private sectors.

CONCLUSION

A foreign policy failure in Africa could clearly affect vital U.S. interests resulting in transnational consequences. A U.S. policy failure benefits narcotic rings, organized crime, and creates a breeding ground for state-sponsored terrorism. In this age of global travel and migration, policy failure threatens world health and economic prosperity. Failure also threatens global environmental security and bio-diversity. Most importantly, a policy failure in Africa means a growing alienation of the people due to social and ethnic tensions. This could ultimately lead to refugees and migrants, and strengthened dictators. [44]

In the final analysis, however, democracy, prosperity, and the security of Africa rest with African leadership. Without strong internal support for change, strong national institutions and extensive political and economic reform are not achievable. However, a coherent and consistent U.S. regional policy that respects African culture and traditions and seeks partnership and not dominance can greatly contribute to the emergence of a Sub-Saharan Africa centered on democratic and pragmatic approaches to development. Without coherent economic and political development, Africa will be condemned to a continuous cycle of instability and crisis.

Word Count: 5525

ENDNOTES

[1] "Sub-Saharan Africa: Progress or Drift?," in Priorities for a Turbulent World, Strategic Assessment 1999, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Washington DC. Available from <http//www.ndu.edu//inss/sa99/cont.html.; Internet; accessed on 17 October 2000.

[2] Dan Henk, US National Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa, Parameters, Winter 1997-98, p107.

[3] It is understood that Africa is not a nation but a collection of nations. Discussing U.S. policy inconsistencies on a nation-by-nation basis is not within the practicalities of this paper; therefore African policy is presented in a macro context.

[4] William Jefferson Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington D.C.; The White House, Dec 1999) p

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